

State lawmakers bracing for potential fourth special session

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It's the first Monday Washington state lawmakers are finally back home and not negotiating a budget. (AP file photo)

After 176 days, nearly six months, and three special sessions, it's the first Monday Washington state lawmakers are finally back home and not negotiating a budget.

The record-long session finished Thursday night and as soon as the gavel came down, State Senator Michael Baumgartner was out the door and driving back to his hometown of Spokane.

He says all he wants to do is get back to the basics, like mowing the lawn and playing with his kids.

"We actually had a child in the middle of the session - or what should have been the end of the session, actually - about three months ago, so now we're able to schedule the baptism for our little new baby," Baumgartner said.

It may be a short leave as lawmakers could be called back for a fourth special session.

Representative Chad Magendanz, a Republican from Issaquah and ranking member of the House Education Committee, says they have a report due to the State Supreme Court later this month on the McCleary mandate to fully fund education.

"There is a chance that if they interpret that some elements weren't addressed that they wanted, they could pull us back," Magendanz said. "Or they could set up a situation where we had to come back for a fourth special session. But we're all hoping that's not the case."

Magendanz said he's hoping the Court will accept their progress so far, putting \$1.3 billion toward education and phasing in tuition cuts at state colleges.

About the Author



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Jillian Raftery is a reporter for KIRO Radio 97.3 FM. She loves the neighborly vibe of the Pacific Northwest and spends as much time as possible outdoors.